



Smart RFID Sensors Monitor Opiates in the Supply Chain

Gives Doctors Insight into Patient's Medication Habits, Monitors Critical Drugs with Addictive Potential

Extended-release opiates are state-of-the-art medications for managing moderate to severe chronic pain. They are safe when used as directed, but they do have high potential for abuse and addiction.

The problem is that pain patients, when first prescribed these drugs, feel an immediate and profound sense of relief. Their anxiety is reduced. As the drug's effects wear off and pain starts to return, the patient is reminded of how bad the pain was in the past and develops anticipatory anxiety. The patient is then at risk to shorten the inter-dose interval from 12 to say 10 or 11 hours. As the patient develops increased ability to metabolize opiates (tolerance) the process is accelerated until the patient may be taking the medication every 3 or 4 hours.

Patients rarely tell their physician or pharmacist when they are noncompliant with medication instructions. With opiates, they may fear of losing the right to continue with what may be the only source of relief they have experienced. When they run out early, they often substitute other pain medication until they can get their prescription renewed. Over time, this can lead to addictive behavior (ie: drug seeking). Getting medication from others, buying opiates on the street, and multiple-doctoring are some of the ways patients supplement their prescriptions.

Electronic compliance monitoring (ECM[®]) records when the patient takes a dose from a blister package. On return to the physician or pharmacist the information is down-loaded to give an instant view of the patient's compliance. Problematic use can be detected before the patient enters the addiction cycle and can be corrected by targeted education.

ECMs are a rational solution to the accelerating problem of opiate dependence, especially with extended release preparations.

Allan Wilson MD Ph.D.

Clinical Director, Substance Use and Concurrent Disorders Program
Professor of Psychiatry, University of Ottawa

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For Further Information Contact:

Joanne Watters (613) 745-8400 ext. 404 jwatters@informationmediary.com



Precision RFID sensors located inside Med-ic[®] equipped pharmaceutical packages monitor patient dosing regimen

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MEDIARY CORP.

2150 Thurston Drive, Suite 101
Ottawa, Ontario K1G 5T9 Canada

